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March 15, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
March 14, 1960

Others present: Secretary Herter, Secretary Dillon, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Kohler, Mr. Hillenbrand, General Goodpaster

Mr. Herter said that Chancellor Adenauer wants to see the President alone for a while during his appointment tomorrow. The President said he would do this, and would listen to the Chancellor who seems increasingly confirmed in the rigidity of his attitudes. He thought he was going to have to tell Chancellor Adenauer that the American people are not going to be disposed to subordinate themselves and their objectives to those of the Chancellor. Mr. Herter commented that the difficulty for the President in relation to the summit is that it is our objective to attempt to have meaningful negotiations, and we are in fact committed to the Russians to do so, but that Adenauer takes the stand that certain topics should not even be discussed. The President stated strongly that he would decide what the United States would or would not discuss at these meetings.

Mr. Herter said that the Chancellor is going to raise the matter of German assets. He handed the President a one-page summary memorandum which he suggested the President give to Adenauer. After discussion the President said he felt the State Department should hand Adenauer the memorandum. Although we have supported the principle of honoring private property, and returning the private German assets, we have a treaty signed with the Germans which says that we owe them nothing.

Mr. Herter then gave the President a briefing memorandum on points Chancellor Adenauer is likely to raise; and also a suggested statement that could be given to the press after the meeting between the two men. The President read these with care. Mr. Dillon said that,

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with regard to aid to the underdeveloped nations, the Germans are really doing very little in a form in which help is useful, i.e., in long-term loans. Most of what they are doing is simply financing their own exports on a very short-term basis. Secretary Anderson stresses this point. The President said he thought he would tell Adenauer if he wants to brighten up the German reputation, which has suffered recently because of the Jewish incidents, the approach to Spain on bases, etc., long-term loans would be an area in which the Germans could do something worthy and effective.

The President said that Berlin seems to him to be the key. This is an abnormal situation. He does not see how we could support the economic life of West Berlin if civil access were restricted. The Soviets and East Germans could observe the letter of existing commitments and still starve West Berlin, since the rights pertaining to the economic life of the city are very cloudy.

Mr. Herter said the problem is that the Germans are unwilling to explore any alternatives to the present status of Berlin. Mr. Dowling stated that German opinion insists upon the retention of occupation rights, and holds strongly that any alternative status for West Berlin would be less desirable than the present one. Should there be an attempt to shock West Berlin, the West

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Germans would in his opinion subsidize and support the city, even to include an airlift.

He came back to the point that he does not understand what he could do if access to West Berlin were restricted for civil transit. Mr. Dowling reiterated that the Germans would pay for an airlift, but Mr. Herter commented

Mr. Herter observed that Adenauer is being subjected to continuing propaganda attack, of a most bitter personal nature, by the Russians. The President said that our situation is that the West, except for Adenauer, thinks we should explore alternatives on Berlin. Adenauer will not touch this, and the allies are therefore divided. For our part we stand by our position insofar as it is a matter of not being thrust out by force. Adenauer is not being realistic with regard to the threat of starving Berlin out, however.

Mr. Herter suggested that the application of the principle of self-determination may help to solve our questions in West Berlin and East Germany. The President recalled that Khrushchev had said he had agreed to self-determination in East Germany, but only after ten years of preparing for it. Mr. Herter said that Khrushchev had talked of self-determination in Pushtunistan when he recently visited Afghanistan and that perhaps this could be applied in East Germany,

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The President commented that the possibilities in the Berlin situation are such that this is something over which a war could occur. Mr. Dowling said the German people are very firm on this matter. He commented that a spirit of nationalism seems to be growing quite fast in Germany. By 1961 we will find the Germans very strong militarily and beginning to push on some of their objectives. Mr. Herter commented that this is a very dangerous development, especially in connection with the unsettled status of the East German frontiers. Mr. Dowling said there are no longer any Germans in Western Poland; nearly seven million of them were moved out at the close of the war. He thought the President should talk to Adenauer and press him very hard on this. He regarded this matter most seriously and said it could be a cause of war. Mr. Herter suggested that the question of the eastern frontiers may be a reason for the Soviet drive for a peace treaty, which would purport to settle the border question.

Ambassador Dowling suggested that there are two things to push Adenauer on -- the border question and the matter of recognizing Eastern Germany. He did not think that it would be wise to push Adenauer hard on the subject of Berlin.

The President asked Mr. Herter to tell Von Brentano that the President and the Chancellor should meet with Mr. Herter and Von Brentano present. Mr. Herter recalled the Chancellor's request for a few minutes alone with the President. Mr. Dowling suggested thirty minutes for their private discussions.



A. J. Goodpaster
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